

Valley Women's Voice
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MAY

vol. VIII, issue IV



It was a beautiful day to come out!!

photo by Annie Clarkin

Behind the scenes at the CIA on Trial Project

By Margaret Lobenstein

Two years ago Valley resident Lisa Sheehy chose to work off her court-ordered punishment at the New England Learning Center for Women in Transition. For what was she being punished? For actively opposing CIA recruitment on the UMass campus in Amherst.

In recent weeks, Lisa turned up as a defendant in a CIA trial once again. While much of the media focused on that trial's personalities (Amy Carter and Abbie Hoffman were among the fifteen defendants), VWV interviewed Lisa Sheehy to get a clearer picture of what this trial meant.

VWV: Lisa, give us a little background. You were involved in an anti-CIA protest two years ago. What was happening then?

LS: Two years ago there were protests against CIA recruitment on campuses around the country, including U. of Colorado at Boulder, U. of Wisconsin at Madison, Brown U. in Providence, and around Massachusetts at Brandeis, Tufts, BU, UMass/Boston, etc. Here at UMass Amherst, six people managed to get in to speak with the CIA recruiters. We let them know that many students were aware of the crimes of the CIA and were outraged at their abuse of human rights and peoples around the world. We expressed our feelings that their covert operations also abused our own right to democratic input here at home.

VWV: What happened?

LS: Two of us were arrested and had a non-jury trial. During that trial we had experts testify that the CIA's crimes were severe enough to require student protest, even if we had to commit misdemeanors to make that protest.

VWV: So the two actions were similar?

LS: They're similar in that both are responses to the presence of CIA recruiters on campus. But the recent action was much larger. About 150 people participated in the sit-ins, sixty were arrested, and there were fifteen defendants in this trial instead of two.

VWV: How did you prepare for the trial?

LS: This was a group process that involved reaching out to a lot of people. It was inspiring to learn how many people in so many disciplines are trying to reveal the

truth about the CIA and were willing to take time from their busy schedules to testify in this trial. The defendants included students from Brown, Brandeis and Hampshire, as well as UMass, including one from Canada who risked deportation if convicted, and ten expert witnesses took the stand.

VWV: Why did you feel it was so important to have experts testify?

LS: The experts served two beneficial functions. Their broadest one was to testify under oath and to speak out on campus about their research into the CIA's many roles and their direct experiences with the CIA. This testimony makes available to us, as American citizens, a detailed picture of the CIA's role over time and over many geographic borders. Their detailed research documents the CIA's constant, repeated violation of both US and international law. Those who followed our trial or attended our events did not have to take our word on the CIA's crimes.

continued on page 6

INSIDE . . .

There was a tie for this month's exploitative ad; page 4

Susan Crane looks at Margaret Atwood's novel, The Handmaid's Tale, page 9

This month's "Transitions" focuses on Peggy Perri, a Florence resident who served as a nurse in Vietnam, page 10

Northampton's Lesbian and gay pride march photos by Annie Clarkin, page 11

Gay rights supporters take NOHO

By Emma Goldstein

NORTHAMPTON - "The future belongs to the fearless," said Boston-based political activist Mel King at the May 2 gay pride march and rally here. And certainly, as 1,500 people marched through downtown, chanting, singing or just celebrating, that seemed to be the case.

Warm temperatures and blue skies greeted the sixth annual Lesbian and Gay pride march, whose theme was "proclaim our heritage, claim our future."

Led down Main Street by the Lesbian and Gay Freedom Trail Band of Boston trumpeting cheerful band music, the diverse group of demonstrators were greeted at Pulaski Park by a huge rainbow arch made of balloons.

At Lampron Park before the march, there were joyful reunions between people who had perhaps not seen each other since the last pride march and there was a sense of cheerful excitement as Northampton's biggest annual march began.

Some marchers held cloth banners representing organizations such as the New Jewish Agenda, the Valley Bisexual Network, the Valley Gay Alliance, and the New Alexandria Lesbian Library.

Others held hand-lettered signs such as "We love our gay children and friends," and "Lesbians of color refusing to be silent. We shall not be moved," and "Diversity benefits us all."

People came out of their houses and shops to either "just look" or wave and shout support as the parade moved down Main Street, chanting "He he ho ho, homophobia has got to go," and "What do we want? Gay rights! When do we want them? Now!"

"As a lesbian I am supposed to swear up and down that I would not communicate to my daughter any of the joy and pride that I have found in lesbianism." — activist Mara Math of Boston

Other chants heard were "Ho ho homosexual, the ruling class is ineffectual," and "Two four six eight. How do you know your brother (or sister or mother or father) is straight?"

As organizer Mark Fowles said, "Everybody seemed to have a lot of energy."

At the park, there was an afternoon of speeches, music and theater.

The Girllillas, a Boston-based women's music group whose slogan is "being radical doesn't mean being boring," had the crowd laughing and singing along with their humorous political songs.

Additionally, a dance and celebration was scheduled for that evening at Pearl Street. Since the Pearl Street club is not "youth and wheel chair accessible" some members of the planning committee for the pride march were passing around a petition hoping to ensure that next year's post-march dance will be accessible and chemical free.

Mara Math of the Gay and Lesbian Defense Committee discussed the organization's two-year struggle against Gov. Michael S. Dukakis's foster care policy. Two years ago, when the *Boston Globe* reported that two children had been placed in foster care with two gay men, the Dukakis administration hastily moved the children and issued a policy saying basically lesbians and gays were not allowed to be foster parents.

continued on page 11

CREDITS



Shari Brunell
Annie Clarkin
Marcia Day
Emma Goldstein
Lisa Horan



Debra Horton
Becky Lockwood
Toni Maschler
Beth Menne
Laura Tilsley



SUBMISSIONS WELCOME!

Your contribution to the VWV is greatly appreciated. We ask that all submissions be double-spaced and that a phone # and name be enclosed with all material for editing purposes. If you wish to remain anonymous, please indicate this when submitting items.

The Valley Women's Voice would like to hear from all women. With this in mind, the VWV accepts for the calendar and announcements sections items up to five lines in length about events and topics of interest to women. Announcements for non-profit organizations will be given preference and additional space when it is available. In the cases of profit making organizations, dollar amounts of fees will not be listed. We request that all announcement and calendar items be submitted in writing.

See the display and classified rates for more information.

All letters to the editor present the views of the author only. No statement in any letter to the editor represents any official position of the Valley Women's Voice, the Student Government Association, the administration or trustees of UMass, or the State Board of Regents.

LETTERS

Erving, not Orange

Dear VWV,

I am writing to follow up a letter I'd written two months ago, printed last month in the VWV [see VWV, Volume VIII, issue II]. First I want to make a correction: it was Erving, not Orange, where the incident occurred. To their credit, Orange officials responded promptly to my letter, and informed me that while Officer Parks works for the Orange Police Department part time, he was working for the town of Erving that day. Police Department and local officials, both by mail and on the telephone. My calls to the Erving police chief were never returned.

Unfortunately, I am no longer living in Massachusetts, and it is difficult to find the time and money to hassle with the powers that be. I appreciate the VWV for publishing my letter, and hope to report better news. Meanwhile, do you know of any low-cost legal services that would take on my case?

Thanks for your support.

Sincerely,
Kathy Haas

VWV gets a hand

Dear VWV Collective,

Congratulations on the latest issue of your newspaper! The paper not only looks great, it sounds it! The range of women's political issues that you cover has increased and the quality of the writing has gotten better. The entire staff and all the volunteers should be proud of their work.

Now I can honestly say that I don't subscribe to the VWV just because I'm an old staff member, or because I'm interested in any news from my old home, but because the stories you cover are truly important to me. I was wondering if news of something else that is important to me is going to appear in these pages. I hear that Goodell Library is

empty (and the phallus is erect). Several years ago that space was promised to the Everywoman's Center. Is any organizing being done around this issue? Perhaps your readers know.

I'm sure whatever you choose to include in the next issue that the VWV will continue to be of inestimable value to the activist community in the Valley and elsewhere. As part of the ongoing effort to make women's voices heard everywhere I'd like to transfer my subscription to the group I work with now; The Women's Alliance. Keep up the good work.

Love,
Daria Casinelli

In defense of Summit Leather

To the VWV,

Just a few points I feel I need to respond to.
1) How does one offend and insult women? Do you mean *all* women, some women or a few women? And if these few women feel they speak for all, just how do they derive at what needs to be said? By logic, consensus or divine right?

2) The ad features a well muscled, seven foot tall dominatrix with a paddle. Would it be better to feature (like 90% of the ads in newspapers and national magazines) a little vulnerable woman with pipeline arms and little girl pouts? Which model would insight (sic) "violence against" woman, and if the average macho tangled with the former don't you think he'd get his head flattened?

3) I am always amazed at quantum leaps in pop psychology. I suppose if this ad humiliates and degrades the livelihood of *all* women, then Rambo dolls cause Central American wars, teaching evolution in schools will stop the belief in God and taking aspirin will lead to heroin addiction. You feel that the woman in the ad trivializes all women. I feel your lack of humour, ridiculous assumptions and lack of a better target trivializes your cause.

We may not speak for every woman,

but print this and allow us the chance to speak for ourselves.

Summit Leather

One other thing: Both businesses you have attacked are run by women. Doesn't that tell you something?

Agrees with Fine

Dear VWV:

I did not see the Gazebo ad, but I totally agree with Ms. Fine. Liberation begins with caring for and *taking care of* yourself. Some women (myself included) enjoy wearing beautiful and comfortable (not necessarily "sexy") lingerie for their own sense of well-being. I have never worn lingerie just to please a man. I commend Ms. Fine for designing and successfully marketing her own line of high quality lingerie and I wish her continued success.

Deborah Partington

letters cont. on page 5

Notes from the Collective

Well folks, here it is May and we've managed to print the paper on a regular monthly basis since February! That's four months of hard but worthwhile work. It's also quite an accomplishment considering the small number of women who (sacrifice their peace of mind sometimes) to work on the paper. We are grateful for the support and patience of those women who have "hung in" for the past months. Now, since it's May, we all get a vacation! The Valley Women's Voice is now officially on summer hiatus until the printing of the August edition — have a nice summer!

Also, if you've noticed, the type style of this issue is a little different than in the past. We of the Valley Women's Voice want to offer a *memorial to souvenir*, the type style in which we used to print. Unfortunately, souvenir became too warped for use (it bit the dust) and has been laid to rest by SGA Communications Office. Hopefully they will have a new one by August. But, for now — So long souvenir —

"Being radical doesn't mean being boring"

The GIRLILLAS

May 15 8:00 pm
at the Blue Wall, UMass

The Valley Women's Voice was born in 1979 after feminist women, angered by the UMass student newspaper's refusal to give adequate coverage to women's news, occupied the offices of the Daily Collegian.

Since that early spring, the Voice has gone through changes of personnel, location and format. It is now a 12-page monthly with a distribution of 6000 and a mailing list of 220 subscribers and exchange publications.

With an office in the Student Union Building on the UMass campus, and status as a Recognized Student Organization, the Valley Women's Voice is a small business staffed by students and community women.

A healthy share of advertisers help keep the paper financially afloat, and supplies, advice and technical assistance are available through the University. Readers, contributors, and volunteers support the paper, which circulates between Amherst, Northampton and Springfield. Outlying towns and regions receive the Voice via the U.S. Mail and willing commuters.

Next Production: Submissions:

July 25-26
Articles — July 15
Ads — July 20

Display and Classified Ad Rates

Camera Ready

Full Page.....	\$250.00
Half Page.....	\$125.00
Third Page (2 col x 8") or (3 col x 4").....	\$100.00
Sixth Page (1 col x 8") or (2 x 4").....	\$60.00
Twelfth Page (2 col x 2") or (1 x 4").....	\$30.00
Twenty-fourth Page (1 col x 2").....	\$20.00
Business Card Size.....	\$18.00
Classified Ads.....	\$25 word

Contract Discount

4 issues.....	5%
9 issues.....	10%

Payment is due within seven days of publication.

An additional 10% pre-payment discount may be subtracted from your cost if payment is received before the 27th of the month prior to publication.

In lieu of "tear sheets" all advertisers will receive a complimentary copy of the paper.

All changes in ad copy must be received by the 20th of the month prior to publication, unless other arrangements are made with the ad representative.

One column is 3 & 1/4 wide.

Newsbriefs

College Enrollment of Disabled Triples

WASHINGTON - The percentage of college freshman with disabilities has nearly tripled since Congress passed a law barring discrimination against the handicapped, reported the American Council on Education's Resource Center for the Handicapped and the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. Students who identified themselves as disabled has grown from 2.6% in 1978 to 7.4% in 1985.

The study also found that "in general, the college freshman with a disability is older, less academically prepared for a higher education, from a lower high school class standing, possessing a lower level of self-confidence."

Meanwhile, the College Board released a separate study that concluded most handicapped students stand as good a

NH: gays unfit for child care

CONCORD, N.H. - The New Hampshire House declared homosexuals unfit child-care providers rejecting a majority report from one of its committees. The House, seeking a constitutional check of a bill that would bar gays from child-care services in New Hampshire, sent to the state Supreme Court a resolution that states homosexuals are improper role models for children. Members rejected a majority report from the House Judiciary Committee that concluded there was "no convincing evidence" that gays are unfit to care for children.

United Press International

Prenatal Care for Prisoners

A plan to establish a prenatal care facility for pregnant women imprisoned for minor offenses received a financial boost in April when Boston announced a \$52,000 grant to help launch the project.

The Dimrock Community Health Center, in conjunction with Social Justice for Women, has drawn up a plan to establish an Expectant Mothers Residence Program at their Roxbury facility with 13 beds for women serving short terms at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Framingham, the state's only prison for female offenders.

Because women who give birth while incarcerated are separated from their newborns and often have difficulty regaining custody after release, the proposed center will offer prenatal health care, education in parenting and treatment for substance abuse.

"This is the only way to break the cycle of drugs and jail for these families, a cycle with a high cost both in economic and social terms," said Lyla Austin, co-director for Social Justice for Women, an organization that has established other programs, including a health and learning center at MCI-Framingham.

Women in the program will be kept in a minimum-security environment and will be accepted only if they are serving sentences for nonviolent crimes and are willing to enroll in the program for at least six months, including six weeks after giving birth. For some women, it will mean a commitment to stay in the program longer than their incarceration.

The Boston Globe

Off Our Backs

Associated Press (Boston Globe)

chance of getting into college as their nonhandicapped peers with similar high school grades and Scholastic Aptitude Test scores.

But there were some exceptions to that rule. Students with hearing impairments were more likely to win admission despite low grades and SATs, while students with learning disabilities were slightly less likely to be admitted. Admissions were lower than predicted for the relatively few visually impaired and physically handicapped students who applied to small colleges.

"If there were full participation for people with disabilities, we estimate that 8.5% of our nation's college freshman would be disabled," said Harold Russell, chairman of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

The Boston Globe



Woman Leads Editors

SAN FRANCISCO - Katherine Fanning, editor of The Christian Science Monitor, became the first woman to be named president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, a 65-year-old organization whose members include editors of the largest daily papers in the US.

Because the society's president, in effect, speaks for the nation's newspaper editors, the position is considered to be one of the most visible and prestigious in American journalism.

Ms. Fanning said she intended to emphasize such issues as the need to hire and promote blacks, women and members of other groups that are largely absent from the top ranks of journalism. She has also created a new committee to study the future of newspapers, reflecting her belief that newspaper editors are not paying enough attention to why readers are defecting to television and other sources of information.

(New York Times)

Canada Bars Sterilization Without Consent

ONTARIO — Canada's Supreme Court ruled in October that no one, including the courts, has the power to approve the sterilization for contraceptive purposes of any person who does not give her or his consent. This decision came in the case of "EVE" (a pseudonym), a Prince Edward Island woman who is developmentally handicapped and whose mother asked the courts to allow her to arrange a tubal litigation for her daughter. Eve is in her early 30's and lives in a group home.

Off Our Backs

Fat Feminist Conference

NORWALK, CT - Sponsored by the National Association to Aid Fat Americans, which was formed in 1969 to fight discrimination against fat people, the Fat Feminist Conference drew 40 women. All of the women described discrimination against them, including denial of employment based on their weight. Others spoke of addiction to amphetamines - drugs which supposedly promote weight loss - of endless, useless dieting, constant ridicule and of enduring dangerous operations such as stomach stapling.

However many women said "fat" is no longer a dirty word to them. After years of obsessing about their weight and feeling ashamed of their appearance, they have grown to appreciate their bodies. Some said they would no longer choose to be thin, even if they could be so without pain, overnight. "I'm very enthusiastic about being fat," said Ruby Greenwald of Delmar, NY, "I was meant to be fat." Susan Mason, who had her stomach stapled five years ago, resulting in weight loss and a number of infections, said she finally came to realize there was nothing wrong with being fat. "Being fat is part of who I am," she said.

Gay Community News

Court Voids Visa Ban

HORTENSIA DE ALLENDE, the widow of slain, socialist Chilean President, Salvador Allende, has won a three year old federal court case challenging the US government's decision denying her a visa.

"This case explicitly rules that the government was incorrect in denying a visa on ideological grounds," said Terry Gross, who represented Allende.

Allende had been invited to the US in 1983 to speak at International Women's Week festivities in the San Francisco area and in Boston and elsewhere.

The US Justice Department denied Allende a visa, saying she was a member of two groups allegedly affiliated with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Women's International Democratic Federation and the World Peace Council. US District Court Senior Judge, Caffrey, ruled that Allende's membership in the two organizations was insufficient reason to deny the visa. This is apparently the first time a plaintiff has won a case challenging a visa denial on such grounds. Four previous cases have been decided in favor of the government.

The Boston Globe

Few Need Vitamin Pills

NEW YORK - Most Americans do not need vitamin or mineral supplements and large doses can produce serious illnesses, according to guidelines released by the American Dietetic Association, American Institute of Nutrition, the American Society for Clinical Nutrition and the National Council Against Health Fraud. "Most Americans can and should get all the nutrients they need to be healthy from food rather than supplements," said Alice Smitherman, president of ADA.

Surveys have shown that 40% of Americans are taking vitamin or mineral supplements said Dr. Calloway at a press conference. Half of those are doing so to ensure against vitamin deficiencies and are probably not harming themselves, he said. The other half are taking large doses

Advocate for Lesbian and Elderly Concerns

The State Attorney General's office has hired an advocate to focus on lesbian and gay, elderly and health care issues. Ray Gottwald, president of the gay and lesbian Bay State Democratic Club and former Grants Manager at Boston's Department of Elder Affairs, was hired as Special Assistant for Community Outreach by Attorney General James Shannon.

Gottwald expects to "serve as a link between organizations and advocacy groups to make sure (their) positions are heard in the administration." Gottwald said he has already begun to work against HIV testing by insurance companies and for the lesbian and gay rights bill.

(Gay Community News)

Women's Museum Opens

April marked the opening in Washington D.C. of America's first women's museum: the National Museum of Women in the Arts. The brainchild of art patron Wilhelmina Holladay, the museum will house 500 works representing 190 artists from 19 different countries. The collection dates from the Renaissance to the present.

Holliday's goal is simple. In a country where less than 5% of artists represented in museums are women, "there is a wide dimension of history not covered," Holliday told *New Directions for Women*. "The time has come for women to be taken seriously. We are here to show the fine work they've done."

Yet for some feminists, this is not enough. Various women artists and art historians have accused Holliday of betraying the women's movement by making the museum apolitical. They call her collection conservative, and the museum "a place where we can show pretty, nice pictures." Others question the wisdom of segregated gallery space for women instead of more integrated collections in major museums.

Holliday is undaunted. "I don't think we have to be controversial (in our exhibits) and address issues like homosexuality and abortion. They are divisive; they destroy and separate . . . It's the sum of total western philosophical culture and history that can be changed gently. Once we establish the stature of women throughout that history, the other will come automatically."

Sojourner

to try to prevent illnesses such as cancer, osteoporosis and heart disease, and they may be in danger, Calloway said.

The nutrition groups guidelines said the following groups may require some vitamin or mineral supplementation:

*Women with excessive menstrual bleeding may require iron supplements.

*Women who are pregnant or breast feeding may require some extra nutrients, including iron, folic acid and calcium.

*People with very low caloric intakes, including many elderly, may require extra vitamins.

*Some vegetarians may be deficient in calcium, iron, zinc and vitamin B-12.

*Newborn infants are generally given a single dose of vitamin K to prevent abnormal bleeding.

Associated Press (Boston Globe)

Exploitative Ad of the Month

Why is everyone
so fascinated
with Ellen?



We've picked apart her features.
And she isn't beautiful.
Her nose is too long and her bottom teeth are crooked.
Her hair is just regular brown —
you'd never call it chestnut or auburn.
And she certainly isn't glamorous.

So when this guy said,
"You smell great, Ellen," we almost died.
Why is everyone so fascinated with Ellen?

Jovan Floral Fragrances.
Wear them and create your own intrigue.

© 1986 Beecham Cosmetics Inc.

I CAN'T GET NO SATISFACTION.



I don't know what's with you girls. Always changing your minds. Your body says yes but your lips say no. You're not like Maggie, I fantasized about her too.

You, Sandy, make me feel different. Not like the rest. You're special. You wouldn't play with my head. You know I'll respect you. What about tonight?

This is an advertisement for Jordache jeans

It's a tie - YOU CHOOSE!



Sue Fink!

SUNDAY MAY 17th

Northampton Center
For The Arts

Tickets: \$6 gen, \$8 contrib.
P.M. Sharp

Available at: NORTHAMPTON: Country Comfort & Northampton Center For The Arts Box Office
ACREAGE: Food For Thought Books, For The Record (Fax) & Every Woman's Center (U.S.A.)
CREDITFIELD: World Eye Books; BRATTLEBORO: Evergreen's Books; PITTSFIELD: Good Godes; and
NARROW: Readers Feast Bookstore/Cafe. ALSO BY MAIL: P.O. Box 833, Northampton, Mass. 01060.
MORE-INFORMATION, LOW-INCOME AND GROUP TICKETS, AND ALL INFORMATION CALL (413)584-4235.

SPECIAL (FREE) AFTER CONCERT
Women's Craft & Bake Sale

ALSO: ALIX DOBKIN
ONLY

SATURDAY, JUNE, 6th, 8:00 PM
Pratt Aud., Mt. Holyoke College

This is a monthly column addressing the multimedia exploitation of women. Does media exploitation bother you? Let us know. We'd love to see your suggestions. The competition is tough, so we don't guarantee that your favorite ad will win, but don't let that discourage you. The sooner you send it in, the better its chances will be. (P.S. The decision will be made during each month's production, so you know where and when to be to influence the decision!)

The Valley Women's Voice Collective



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Mary Elizabeth Wexford, Psy.D.
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

NORTHAMPTON / AMHERST AREA

THE PHANTOM TOLLBOOTH

By Toni Maschler

The phantom tollbooth is magical. In Norton Juster's book by this name, the tollbooth is the portal through which Milo enters new and unexplored worlds. Literature can serve this purpose, transforming bored and boring Milos into curious and creative people. In my reviews of books I try to keep this spirit of adventure and exploration in mind. I look for books which introduce children to different ways of life; I look for books which work against the myriad of "isms" which constrain people with labels; but most of all, I look for books which express the magic and wonder of discovering new worlds.

Remember Not to Forget by Norman Finkelstein, illustrated by Lois and Lars Hokanson. New York: Franklin Watts. 1985. \$9.95 (cloth). Ages five to ten.

April 26th was *Yom Hashoa*, Holocaust Memorial Day. If you have not yet discussed the Holocaust with your child, this book is a must. *Remember Not to Forget* is an important book. It tells the truth about the Nazi murder of six million Jews, and it tells it without sensationalism and without hatred. It shows the insidious progression from discrimination to personal attacks, and finally to full-scale genocide. The simple text and stark woodcuts place Hitler's "solution" in a context of a 2000-year-old history of anti-Semitism and its roots in misunderstanding and fear. The book also tells of the creation of the state of Israel, the establishment of *Yad Vashem*, the Holocaust museum, and the designation of *Yom Hashoa*.

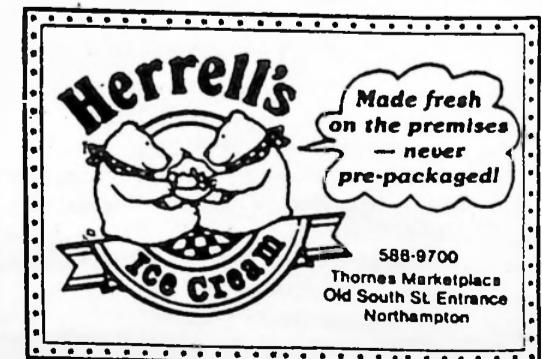
Finkelstein says, "On Yom Hashoa Jews around the world will pause each year to remember...to remember not to forget." I hope that it is not only Jews. We must all remember; we cannot afford to forget.

Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain by Verna Aardema, illustrated by Beatriz Vidal. New York: Dial Books, E.P. Dutton, Inc. 1981. \$3.95 (paper). Ages two to six.

This delightful Nandi folktale from Kenya tells how clever Ki-pat brings the rain for his thirsty cows. The author has presented the story in cumulative verses ala *The House that Jack Built*; this tale has infinitely more charm, however. The plot is engaging, and Aardema's use of rhyme, rhythm and subtle alliteration make the book a read-aloud favorite.

Aardema's lyrical text is complemented by Vidal's use of color and line. Her illustrations of the plants and animals of the African savanna are breathtaking. Let's hope the two of them collaborate again soon.

These books are available at Ali Cat in Amherst.



Voices of Southern African Women

by Pauline Cohen from AFRICA NOW

In February, a rare event was held in London: the International Conference for Solidarity with the Women of Southern Africa. It was unique in that it brought together women from South Africa, from Namibia and the frontline states, face to face with women from a number of Western countries and East Europe—countries like Britain, USA, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, USSR, Bulgaria. Some of these countries' prevarication on sanctions is increasing the odds against the liberation struggles in Southern Africa.

"This conference could not have been held at a more opportune time," remarked Sally Mugabe. "Southern Africa is in turmoil," she went on. "Its peace, security and stability is seriously threatened by the apartheid regime of South Africa." The Republic of South Africa makes its presence felt in each and every country of the region, in each case the desired result is the same—the perpetuation of white rule—but the methods vary. In South Africa, it is apartheid enforced by the violence of the state; in Namibia it is an occupying army; in Angola and Mozambique the Republic operates through puppet organizations and it carries out bombing raids on the other independent frontline states with impunity.

To talk about "the threat to the region" at once draws attention to the way apartheid reaches beyond its own borders and, at the same time, allows a kind of distancing from the reality. One achievement of the conference was to bring that reality home to many of the European women's organizations, whose general support for anti-apartheid campaigns is often contradicted by their reluctance to support the armed struggle of the liberation movements.

The delegate from Zimbabwe, Rudo Mungwashu, therefore made the point that support for the political movement is weakened if the same support is denied to the armed struggles. "We here are the mothers and sisters of those who are fighting," she said.

In Namibia the reality is the imposition of a parasitic "interim government" which answers to the Botha regime rather than to the people it is supposed to govern. It means 15 years of a State of Emergency and five years of martial law in the north of the country. It also means freedom for an occupying army to rape, abduct and carry out torture methods like the roasting alive of Titus Paulus and Portasius Blasius.

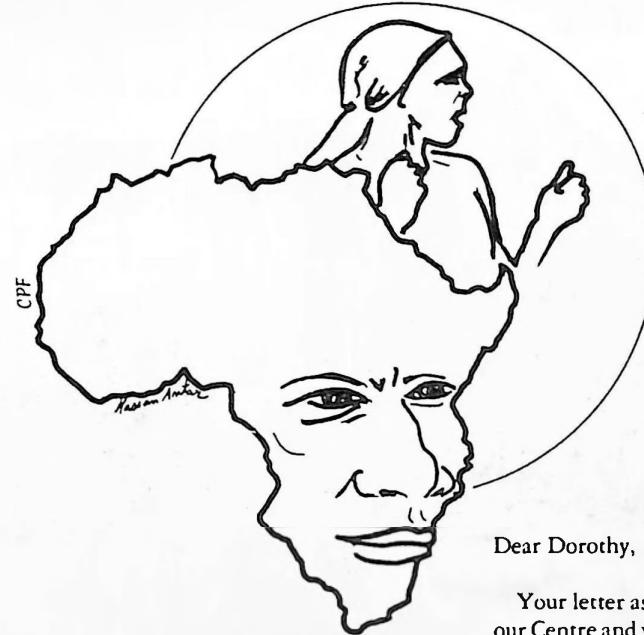
In Mozambique and Angola it means the setting back of the people's revolutions by constantly attacking and destroying economic and social infrastructure and ambushing food and medical supplies. The major victims are women and children, such as the young girls who are abducted to be the "wives" for the MNR bandits. For other frontline states the problems extend beyond destabilization tactics to include an increase in the number of refugees and the consequent pressure on already weak economies.

The conference also drew attention to South Africa's build-up of nuclear arms, the support it gets from Israel and the real threat that this poses to peace in the region. The women of Southern Africa also asked the women of the West to demonstrate their solidarity by campaigning for the imposition of full and mandatory sanctions on South Africa—in particular, increased campaigning against Shell which acts as an overseas agent for South Africa, selling coal in return for supplying the regime with oil; actively support the liberation struggles by providing material aid: medical kits, clothing, women's toiletry kits, creche and childrens' kits. Other demands included:

*Intensification of the campaign for the immediate release of South African and Namibian political prisoners and the granting of prisoner-of-war status to captured freedom fighters.

*Stopping the execution of Theresa Ramashamola and the others facing the death sentence.

*Intensification of the campaign to implement resolution 435 for the independence of Namibia.



Dear Dorothy,

*Enforcement of UN Decree #1 prohibiting foreign exploitation of Namibia's mineral resources.

The conference was organized by the Women's Democratic Federation and Britain's National Assembly of Women.

letters cont. from page 2

How about Women's Aid?

To the VWV -

The enclosed letter was sent to me after I responded to a letter from Mrs. Edemikpong in your March issue—requesting help for the women at the Center who, although they had been teachers and other professionals, had been forced into prostitution because of the economy in Africa and were unable to survive on their own even then. If this letter doesn't encourage people to help, certainly there is nothing I can say that will.

Thank you,
Dorothy Baker

P.S. We've had Live Aid and Farm Aid, how about WOMEN AID? Let's not forget these women!

Your letter as well as your donation to our Centre and women had been received and we are very grateful to your prompt action in responding to our clarion call for help. We wish to thank you for your solidarity with us during this our difficult moment and in the interest of international feminism for as Virginia Wolf said, "As a woman I have no country as a woman my country is the whole world."

As for the kind of clothing we use, we are in the tropical zone of the world which is very hot almost all through the year round so we need light clothing materials, and cotton dresses. With all pleasure we would readily accept the vitamins which you have opened which you cannot use. It would be very valuable to us, so we plead with you to send them to us at your convenience.

Once again Dorothy, thank you for your love and concern for the plight of our inmates and please tell your friends and other people about our plight and urge them to come to our aid in their own small way, perhaps there might be someone to help.

We hope you will be in touch with us at your earliest convenience. Dorothy, we love you and wish you many happy returns.

In sisterhood
Hannah Edemikpong (Mrs)
Womens Centre
P.O. Box 185, Eket
Cross River State,
Nigeria, West Africa

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photo by Annie Clarkin

An interview with activist Lisa Sheehy

continued from page 1

VWV: What was the second function the experts performed?

LS: In court, we would not have been allowed to defend our actions with any statements about the CIA that we did not gain from direct experience.

VWV: What does that mean?

LS: If I based my actions on something I know because I've studied books on the subject, this is not accepted by the court. Such knowledge is considered hearsay. Only people who have had direct contact with victims of Contra atrocities or someone whom the court acknowledges as an expert on the subject of Contra atrocities can speak on that subject before the jury. So the role of the experts was to present what would have been ruled out if we had said it ourselves. We were fortunate that such people are eager to support student actions such as ours.

VWV: Have these experts done this for other actions also?

LS: Oh yes, what happened at UMass is just part of anti-CIA activities that have taken place at a variety of campuses. Many of "our" experts have supported this struggle against CIA recruitment on other campuses as well.

VWV: What is so significant about CIA recruitment?

LS: Campus recruitment is one of the very few places where the CIA puts in a public appearance. In part, such an appearance serves a public relations role for the CIA. The organization likes to be able to show up in public as if they were just like any other business or government agency. When the University invites them in and provides them with space and support personnel, this gives the CIA legitimacy; the assumption is that they are a law-abiding agency, here to recruit for legitimate, legal activities. This appearance for recruitment is also one of the few ways one can connect with and attempt to control the CIA.

VWV: What do you mean, one of the few ways. Aren't there lots of controls on the CIA?

LS: Unfortunately, one of the major conclusions of the testimony of the experts as a group is No, there are not. The Executive Branch has trouble controlling the CIA. Former Attorney General Ramsay Clark testified that the Director of the CIA had lied to him while he was Attorney General under Johnson, and that the CIA had, in fact, carried out illegal activities while he was the head of the Justice Dept. Congress also has trouble. 25-year veteran of the CIA Ralph McGehee testified at length about his own participation in CIA deliberate deception of Congress. In this regard, Ramsay Clark also pointed out that the CIA avoids traditional Congressional control via the purse strings; it gets one blanket budget sum and whole areas of its activities are therefore not under scrutiny. The courts do not offer much help either. Attorney William Schaap explained in his testimony that all of the court suits he had brought against the CIA on behalf of members of Congress had been dismissed on the basis that the judiciary is not the place to oversee the CIA.

VWV: What do you mean by that?

LS: During WWII many German citizens obeyed Nazi law and, in accordance with those laws, slaughtered the Jewish people. Civilized nations, led by the U.S., tried many of those "law-abiding" citizens at the war trials at Nuremberg. That trial resulted in the Nuremberg Principles guiding international law, principles that require individual citizens to disobey national laws if that is necessary to uphold international law.

VWV: What about groups outside the government. Can they do anything?

LS: Testimony relevant to this issue was also presented. The academic community or interested citizens trying to form accurate views of the world situation and the CIA's role in it cannot necessarily make accurate evaluations. Schaap, who edits the Covert Action Information Bulletin, explained under

oath that the CIA is secretly in the publishing business, funding more than 240 "private" publishing companies that publish the CIA's view of world events without revealing whom their writers are really working for. And when citizen groups speak out against U.S. policies they oppose, the CIA is likely to infiltrate such groups. Schaap's testimony indicated that such infiltration is not contested; it is provided for in CIA regulations. Even individuals who are direct victims of CIA practices may not know they are dealing with the CIA. Schaap stated under oath that the CIA secretly used unsuspecting prostitutes and derelicts in its MK ULTRA drug testing program.

VWV: So does the American citizen have any way to control the CIA, directly or indirectly?

LS: That is what our protest was about. We feel that it is absolutely necessary for US citizens to protest when all other channels to prevent criminal actions are closed to them.

VWV: This is the "necessity defense" that was used in your trial. Can you explain that?

LS: Yes. Even the laws concerning trespass and disorderly conduct allow for "within right" and "legitimate purpose". Commonwealth law respects federal law as primary. And the U.S. Constitution considers international treaties as the highest law of our land. We felt that our actions were within right and for a legitimate purpose in that they were in accordance with international law.

VWV: And you feel that the CIA is breaking international law?

LS: It is not a question of what I or the other defendants feel. At the end of World War II, the US. was instrumental in setting up the World Court to determine such issues. The U.S. has made frequent use of this Court when upset by the actions of other countries. President Carter, for example, charged Iran in the World Court during the hostage situation and won its case and the right to freeze Iranian assets in this country. The World Court specifically ruled that the U.S., through the CIA, had violated international law when it mined Nicaraguan harbors.

The Nuremberg Principles . . . require individual citizens to disobey national laws if that is necessary to uphold international law.

VWV: Are there other laws the CIA has violated?

LS: Edgar Chamorro, once a key leader of the anti-Sandinista contras, told the jury that it was the CIA who trained the contras in terrorist tactics; it was the CIA who wrote the manual he was asked to translate that included directions for the assassination of judges, doctors, and other respected Nicaraguan civilians; it was the CIA that had him lie to Congressmen, had him go to Honduras to bribe the press there to alter their stories, had him put out false press releases himself to fool the American public and sway the American Congress...in fact, the CIA has blatantly violated some of the oldest and most explicit laws of this country. Their training of contra mercenaries in the South violates the Neutrality Act signed by George Washington which specifies that no one on U.S. soil can prepare, train, finance, etc. military preparations against a country with which we are legally at peace. The CIA also violated the Boland Amendment prohibiting any aid designed to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. It totally ignored the Con-

gressional Oversight Amendment. And the manual Chamorro testified about, with its assassination directives, is in direct violation of the Executive Order against assassination.

VWV: Why do you see the CIA as so important?

LS: The CIA is integrally connected to so many world concerns. The CIA has focused on the Third World for decades now. Some of their most well-documented interventions have been in Angola, Guatemala, Chile, Iran. Recently it has been providing intelligence information to South Africa's security forces. All this impacts on the lives of women in the Third World in so many ways. By both overt and covert activities the CIA distorts the ability of many such societies to develop in a way that gives priority to human issues and benefits the have-nots, making such development difficult, if not impossible. I feel the struggle against the CIA is critical because its responsibility for constant and repeated violations in Nicaragua is not an isolated case. U.S. foreign policy proceeds like this time and time again. By protesting against the CIA we can bring into question America's consistently imperialist and aggressive foreign policy.

VWV: Do you think such protests make any difference?

LS: Daniel Ellsberg testified that he was moved to risk his whole career and a major jail sentence or worse in the leaking of the Pentagon Papers by students who protested the evils of the Vietnam War. Howard Zinn, the historian, traced on the witness stand the many times in the history of our country that critical changes in national policy began as grassroots movement in the streets. When the prosecuting attorney asked Ramsay Clark, as once chief law officer of the land, if legal protests couldn't just as effectively do the job of changing hearts, minds, and policies, he answered, "I believe that if Rosa Parks had not refused to move, we might not have ever heard of Martin Luther King. It's unfortunate, but it took an act like that to awaken the conscience of the country." I think when such protest is necessary, it can make a difference.

VWV: Has it been hard for you to work with people like McGeehee, who have participated in crimes against humanity in the past?

LS: No, I have found it moving and gratifying. I find their speaking out and trying to stop such crimes from continuing shows a sign of hope. When people like that can have a change of heart, when their conscience can come through, and they can use their sense of responsibility for humanity to give them the courage to do what they are doing now, change is possible. And it was a group of jurors from middle America, all over 30, who found the CIA's actions more dangerous than ours and acquitted us.

VWV: You've been an activist in the Valley for many years now. Do you have any comments on the role of women in protests like this one?

LS: Yes, I think it's very important that women activists be involved. We've learned a lot about how to organize. We have learned how to work together in groups, how to communicate sensitively, and how to keep going in the face of difficult odds.

VWV: Will you consider breaking the law again if the CIA is allowed to recruit again at UMass?

LS: The whole point of the not-guilty verdict rendered by our jury is that we did not break the law in protesting CIA recruitment; we obeyed our duty as concerned and conscientious citizens of the international community and upheld it. I certainly hope that I, and many, many more, will have the courage to keep doing so as long as necessary. ♣

Points to ponder from the witness stand

Ralph McGehee

(retired with distinction after 25 years in the CIA)

"Deception of Congress by the CIA is routine practice; I engaged in it myself."

"From 1954-1964, the entire Vietnam War was a CIA covert operation. It didn't become public until the CIA needed U.S. troops sent in, then the CIA literally created evidence to "prove" that North Vietnam was "invading the South," the justification for Operation Rolling Thunder against North Vietnam. The rest is history."

"The principle operation of the CIA is not intelligence gathering but covert operations. This harms rather than improves U.S. security."

"CIA recruiters deceive prospective recruits. I was deceived. No one told me that two thirds of the CIA resources are spent on CODE (covert) operations, not intelligence."

Mort Halperin

(Deputy Assistant of Defense under Lyndon Johnson; author of *The Lawless State*; testified on the CIA before Congress on day before trial appearance.)

"When the CIA secretly mined Nicaragua's harbors,

Junior high girls study science at Hampshire College

by Toni Maschler

On Friday, April 24, eighty junior high girls entered college, at least temporarily. While their friends were savoring the last day of spring vacation, they boarded school bus to attend "A Day in the Lab" at Hampshire College. "A Day in the Lab" is the brainchild of Deb Martin, a professor of physical anthropology at Hampshire. Last year, concerned about the small numbers of junior high girls pursuing science and math, Dr. Martin developed the idea of a program to encourage girls' interest in the sciences. She discussed the idea with other science faculty at Hampshire College, and "A Day in the Lab" was born.

At 9:00, the participants arrived from all over the Valley, and were welcomed by nine faculty members, 32 college students, and several dozen rabbits, chicks, and crayfish. Each participant received a folder containing a program, a pencil, and three "tickets" to science workshops. While newcomers were registering, the girls were invited to hold the animals and trade tickets. Soon the reserved silence was broken by offers of "I'll trade

youFish Farming for Light and Color," and "Does anyone have *Skeletons in your Closet*?" A period of joyous confusion ensued, the bargaining fast and furious above the squeals from pinched fingers.

By 9:30 the frantic trading had stopped and the workshops with the enticing names were beginning. The *Fish Farming* participants were peering into the Hampshire aquaculture tanks and measuring oxygen levels, the *Light and Color* group was observing the refraction of light through a prism, and the *Skeletons* crew was calculating a person's height based on a single thigh bone. (A bit reminiscent of "Quincy", n'est-ce pas?)

Down the hall, Margaret Robinson, a mathematician, was leading a group on brain teasers. A dozen girls were engrossed in problems of dividing a bar of chocolate and manipulating triangles which seemed to shrink and expand at will.

Outside, Kay Henderson, professor of reproductive biology, was conducting a workshop at the sheep farm. In order to determine the effect of an estrus-inducing hormone, Dr. Henderson needed to track the sheep's mating behavior. Each ram wears a harness with a

different colored chalk which marks the female with which he mates. The participants helped record chalk marks for each female sheep, and compared the sexual activity of ewes who had been given the hormone with a control group.

After the workshops and lunch, the participants attended presentations by advanced Hampshire students. The presentations covered a variety of topics ranging from veterinary medicine to chemistry, from infant care to mummies to diet analysis.

At 3:30 everyone piled back into the buses and headed home, discussing things like luminescence and electrocardiograms. Science was never like this when we were in school!

"A Day in the Lab" was jointly sponsored by the Five College/Public School Partnership and the Hampshire College Women in Science program by a grant from Northeast Utilities. Hampshire College is also hosting a bilingual lab day for Holyoke youths, both boys and girls. This program is still without a sponsor. If you are interested in sponsoring this program or assisting with next year's "Day in the Lab", contact Merle Bruno, Dean of Natural Sciences, Hampshire College.

Dykes to Watch Out For



creating danger to ships of many countries and flagrantly violating international law, Congress was so angry that Goldwater and Moynihan, representing Congressional Intelligence Committees, insisted on meeting with (then) CIA director (William) Casey to draw up a preventative agreement.

"This written agreement stipulated explicitly that if the CIA ever 1) secretly transferred arms abroad, 2) undertook illegal covert actions, or 3) had any Presidential directive invoked, Congress was told. Within the very next year, the CIA was involved in all of the above with the Iran-Contra affair that saw arms go illegally to Iran as part of covert actions that Weinberger and Schultz didn't know about due to a revoked Presidential Directive—Congress was not told.

"The CIA on a daily basis intentionally and knowingly violates international law and Congress cannot control it."

William Schaap

(Attorney, journalist, publisher of *Covert Action Information Bulletin*)

"Congress member Ron Dellums filed a suit requiring a Special Prosecutor to investigate high U.S. government

officials involvement in breaking international law and committing crimes against humanity in Nicaragua. Courts dismissed as a political, not legal, issue.

"Congress member Crockett brought suit to expose the illegal role of the CIA in El Salvador. Courts dismissed as a political, not legal issue.

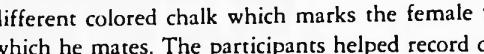
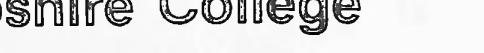
"The United Presbyterians, et al, challenged provisions in CIA regulations under which the CIA engages in domestic surveillance of Central America support groups in the U.S. Courts dismissed as a political, not legal, issue.

"Clearly the judicial branch is not much help in overseeing the CIA's activities.

Ramsey Clark

"The term civil disobedience is too vague. It doesn't identify conduct. Sometimes the term should be obedience to conscience."

"You (the prosecutor) ask if our system is threatened by sit-ins? It is if the university and police response is violent."



NEW BOOKS AT THE EVERY WOMAN'S CENTER LIBRARY

The Campus Troublemakers: Academic Women in Protest
 Athena Theodore
 Cap & Gown Press, Houston, 1986

Theodore's book begins by discussing women's rising consciousness in academia as both graduate students and as faculty. Issues concerning women's status (or lack thereof) in academia are thoroughly covered as well as ways of working through the system. Theodore expresses the need for sisterhood as women who do fight the system will face a serious backlash from it.

The Feminization of America: How Women's Values Are Changing Our Public and Private Lives
 Elinor Lenz and Barbara Myerhoff
 St. Martin's Press, N.Y.; 1985; \$15.95 (cloth)

"The Feminization of America provides startling evidence for the quiet, pervasive social revolution resulting as women gain hands-on power in America's mainstream cultural institutions." (reprinted from book jacket) Lenz and Myerhoff describe feminization as business-women networking, flex-time and corporate-subsidized day care changing the workplace, women demanding changes in the medical establishment, increasing numbers of women in rabbinical schools and seminaries, and many other changes such as degenderized language.

Gifts of Age: Portraits and Essays of 32 Remarkable Women
 Text by Charlotte Painter
 Photography by Pamela Valois
 Chronicle Books, San Francisco; 1985; \$14.95 (soft cover)

This inspiring book shows the achievements of 32 extraordinary women, all over the age of 65, including Dr. Monika Kehoe, Julia Child, and Joan Baez senior. The *Gifts of Age* are meant to be "the time, the freedom, and hopefully the wisdom to develop creative new images of oneself and one's place in the complexities of a long life." (reprinted from book jacket) All of the women have something special and

different to add to an understanding of women's 'extended lives' from their various backgrounds and upbringings.

Infertility Trouble-Shooting: Self-help Suggestions for Regaining Fertility
 Suzannah Cooper
 Small World Publications, Oregon; 1985

Infertility trouble-shooting is explained further as common causes of infertility and suggested solutions. Cooper outlines many different possible causes as well as solutions and suggested reading lists. Some of the areas include diet, amount of food, body alignment, light pollution (too much light) and full-spectrum light (ultra-violet light), saliva, drugs, occupational hazards and stress. Cooper also covers artificial insemination and sex preselection and provides extensive resource lists.

Fighting Back: Lesbian and Gay Draft, Military, and Veterans Issues
 Katherine Bourdonnay, et al.
 Midwest Committee for Military Counseling; 1985

The main purpose of this book is to provide lawyers and counselors, who are trained in military cases, with the current facts and regulations concerning lesbians and gay men in the military. The authors plan to issue a revised supplement on a yearly basis. The text includes a basic historical perspective including why lesbians have an even harder time of it than gay men do in the military. Other areas included: current regulations, gay men and the draft, both voluntary and involuntary discharges, and issues of gay and lesbian veterans.

Women and Alcohol: A Dangerous Pleasure
 Geraldine Youcha
 Crown Publishers, Inc., New York, NY; 1986; \$7.95

Youcha's book is a basic guide to the uses and abuses of alcohol, particularly as they relate to women. She points out patterns of



drinking, stating clearly that alcohol for women, if used intelligently, can be enjoyed without guilt or danger. The text also covers alcohol as it relates to women's history and position in society, going back to the pilgrims at times. *Women and Alcohol* is also a practical source of information, including the place of alcohol use can take in the family, the danger of drinking during pregnancy, a guide to sensible drinking, a resource list of groups to contact and an extensive bibliography. (Some portions adapted from book cover)

Each Hand a Map
 Anita Skeen
 The Naiad Press, Inc.
 1986

Our relationships with women make up the core of our lives. Too often lesbian poetry deals only with the political and the erotic, leaving out vast plains of our lives, the many central relationships that give us strength, power and joy. *Each Hand A Map* seeks gloriously to remedy that, dealing in ordinary language with what most of us will recognize as the reality of the way we live now. (taken from book cover.)

Red Beans and Rice: Recipes for Lesbian Health and Wisdom
 Bode Noonan
 The Crossing Press, NY
 1986

Bode Noonan's book is a brilliant example of the wisdom each of us has, but that we fail to express for fear of being trivial. Noonan uses her discussions of food to introduce thoughts that are fairly connected to food but are relevant to our daily lives. The first chapter is titled "Egg Salad," which you may think is a straightforward topic, however Noonan extrapolates: "So what is it (egg salad) An egg is almost a chicken. Which brings us to the question: should we be eating egg salad at all? I mean is a fetus a human life? Is an egg yolk a living chicken? Should a woman have an abortion? Does a mother hen grieve over the theft of her unborn chick? What if I eat something; does that give me the right to kill it? Is hunting for food a violation of the feminist code?"

In a later chapter on "Bread," Noonan opens by saying that she will not talk about bread but instead will discuss spinach. In fact, she does little of either. If we wonder why she called the chapter bread when she meant to discuss spinach, she explains her logic: "Why the deception, you ask. Why say bread when you mean spinach? Why say unmarried woman when you mean radical lesbian? Why say lesbian when you mean dyke?"

This is a necessary book for looking at our idiosyncratic ways; it is also a very funny and thought-provoking "cookbook."

Compiled by Susan F. Crane

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The politics of the future:

Canadian author Margaret Atwood explores the totalitarian tendencies in contemporary U.S. culture



By Susan Crane

The Handmaid's Tale is an important novel for feminists in the 1980s for a variety of reasons. It is a feminist text on a number of levels; most importantly it portrays women resisting an oppressive patriarchal system. The novel exposes those people who would deny women their basic rights and connects their ideology to a broad range of reactionary politics. Through the imaginary Republic of Gilead, Atwood explores several current issues of debate among feminist theorists. Some of these topics include: visions of utopia for women, directions for western capitalist societies, women's voice in society, and means of resistance.

Another important theme in the novel is the debate between "freedom to" and "freedom from" for women. In particular, Atwood is trying to point out that it is not as simple as an '80s feminist might think to weigh the advantages of freedom from hunger, homelessness and even rape in comparison to the freedom to read and write what and when one wants to, which we take for granted. Thus, although *The Handmaid's Tale* is a work of fiction, it has implications for feminists who may be both struggling to change today's society and wondering about possible future societies.

Practically speaking, the book portrays the antithesis of a utopian society for women. Because of the nature of the society that Atwood creates, the book may be taken in one sense as a warning for all feminist and progressives to be forewarned and to actively fight current right-wing governments around the globe. *The Handmaid's Tale* is set in the near future and shows that an increased use of birth control, AIDS, nuclear facility accidents, and toxic waste all seem to be the cause of an exceedingly low birth rate. The United States has been taken over by Pat Robertson clones and is renamed the Republic of Gilead. Within this society, women are reduced to glorified wombs in order to repopulate the land.

In fact, the women are put into one of five categories in Gilead, they are either "Wives" married to Commanders of the Faithful; "Handmaids," who are defined by their wombs; "Aunts," who train Handmaids for their function; "Marthas," who are mainly minority women who cook and clean; "Econowives," who reproduce and clean for themselves; or "Unwomen," who are infertile, older or lesbian women who are shipped to "The Colonies" to clean up toxic waste. The Wives, Handmaids, and Marthas all work together to serve the Commanders. This formation of society is the antithesis of utopia for women because they are entirely unfree; as opposed to the situation in 1987 when women still have some basic freedoms, though they might be limited.

In discussing the situation of women in 1987, it is important to point out that Atwood's novel only deals with women from North America. The book does not

attempt to portray women's future globally. The society that she creates is the result of a western, capitalist, patriarchal culture. For this reason, it is important to note that the Republic of Gilead is in fact a direct future vision of North America. Atwood may wish to recognize that current American society could soon produce such a blatantly repressive and male-dominated society as Gilead. In this way *The Handmaid's Tale* can be seen as a direct critique of the far-right politics espoused by many U.S. leaders today. Atwood is clearly issuing a warning; in particular, she is warning radical feminists not to find themselves in the same arena as far-right male politicians, even (or especially) over the issue of pornography.

Through her protagonist, Offred, Atwood shows how she believes that the roots of her repressive dystopia lie in current American society. Offred's pre-Gilead name is not revealed to the reader, however, she is *Offred*, her Commander. Many facts about Gilead are left unknown in the novel precisely because Offred, as a Handmaid, has little access to information outside the home. By putting the reader also in the position of the Handmaid, Atwood effectively portrays the limiting conditions of women's lives in Gilead.

Through Offred's flashbacks the reader learns about the period directly before Gilead. Offred's mother (who has been made an Unwoman) was very much of an active feminist, and Offred only appreciates the freedoms which her mother fought for (i.e. women's rights) once she is in Gilead. Offred remembers conversations with her radical lesbian friend Moira whom she had never really listened to or believed. As a Handmaid she understands why Moira was always fighting and angry. Offred also remembers simply being able to sit and talk freely with a friend. The fact that Offred has been separated from her husband and daughter makes the situation even more poignant. In her new role Offred must serve as a carrier of her Commander's children. In the process of remembering the simple and expected freedoms of her past life, Offred presents a convincing critique of the Republic of Gilead.

One of the most striking differences between the life Offred must lead in Gilead and that which she was able to lead previously is the profound silence in her new life. Practically, this may simply be a combination of Atwood's writing style which includes little dialogue and the fact that Offred has virtually no one to talk with. Her social contact is limited to events like daily shopping when two Handmaids are allowed to walk together. Even while shopping the conversation is limited to ritualized dialogue and phrases which are pre-determined by the authorities. Offred's world seems to be a silent one in which she cannot speak her own words and thoughts and in which no one listens to her but "the Eye."

It is unclear whether the omnipresent Eye and the Guardians are there to protect Offred or to restrict her actions. It is this dilemma which brings forth the issue of "freedom to" versus "freedom from." For example, it is true that the women of Gilead are protected from acts of violence and attacks from men, yet this is only accomplished because men and women are kept entirely apart. A related point is that there is no longer any pornography through which to objectify women, a point which would make many feminists very happy. Another supposed freedom is that women no longer have to worry about their appearance, only because makeup no longer exists and they do not have the option to use it. Neither is body size an issue any more, since the Handmaids' obligatory habit-like uniform keeps their faces and bodies wellhidden.

However, the means by which this "protection" and glorification of women is effected is highly questionable. Most women do not have the freedom to read or write anything at any time in Gilead. One of the Aunts describes the situation succinctly. "There is more than one kind of freedom," said Aunt Lydia. "Freedom to and freedom from. In the days of anarchy, it was freedom to. Now you are being given freedom from. Don't underrate it." Offred's confusion over freedom surfaces when Japanese tourists come to visit Gilead. As Offred looks at the women she is horrified to see that they are "practically naked" (wearing miniskirts) and they hobble along on spiked heels. Only slowly does Offred come to realize how influenced her thoughts have become and how little choice she has in her behavior.

Another modern issue of freedom raised in the book is that of surrogate motherhood. The Handmaids are the wombs for Commanders' children while the Wives adopt and care for these children as their own. The issue of surrogacy is not resolved in the novel, but it is interesting to ask whose freedom is abridged. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Wives are not portrayed sympathetically and the reader identifies with the Handmaids through Offred. Because of this, the Handmaids seem less free and more like receptacles. Of course the surrogacy is imposed in Gilead, whereas it is supposedly chosen in America of the 1980's. The surrogacy issue again prompts questions of "freedom to" and "freedom from".

Rather than leave this issue entirely unresolved, however, Atwood includes acts of rebellion and a resistance movement against the Gilead regime in her novel. This is a final reason why I call this a feminist novel, in that women are shown struggling against their oppressors and are given a ray of hope. As might be expected, the Commanders themselves do not abide by the strict system in Gilead. They create a club in which all of the "backward" practices of previous times are allowed; the most important of which is prostitution. Because of this club, women like Offred's rebellious lesbian friend Moira are given a place to be with other women.

It is interesting to note how Offred comes to terms with Moira's acceptance of her new role. After all, she is allowed to speak freely with other women during the 15-minute breaks between clients. Offred herself breaks rules and resists. She develops a relationship with the chauffeur and through him discovers a network of resistance. Thus *The Handmaid's Tale* is meant both as a warning of possible takeover by the far right and as a message that women will be strong enough to resist and recover. ♡

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Transitions:

Woman Vietnam war veteran works for peace

By Barbara McCallum

Transitions is a monthly column spotlighting local women who are in the process of effecting change in their lives. Our society, though expanding its options for women, still conditions many of us to limit our visions of what is possible. There are innovative and courageous women living in the Pioneer Valley who are creating visions and taking the necessary steps to pursue and achieve their goals. This column is about giving women the recognition they deserve for the efforts they expend.

"Just what is it you do exactly?" eight-year-old Danny asked his mom. "What exactly do you think I do?" Peggy Perri responded. "Well, I know you are a nurse and that you teach. I know you have this thing about war and about fighting. So I guess you are a nurse who teaches about peace," Danny summarized.

Peggy Perri, 41, of Florence, knows first hand about the alternative to peace. For 366 days—from March 2, 1967 to March 5, 1968 (it was a leap year)—Peggy served as an Army nurse at the 24th Evacuation Hospital in Long Binh, Republic of South Vietnam. Perri, who witnessed more death in one year than most nurses witness in a lifetime, says she is "fiercely committed to peace, both in the world and within myself." Perri is in the process of bringing home the courageous 21-year-old nurse, who worked sometimes round the clock in mud, blood and tears saving lives. For eighteen of the past twenty years that valiant nurse was silenced by fear, shame, and outright denial. For the past two years Perri has been working hard to give that young nurse a voice.

"I have not yet totally accepted that young girl in Vietnam as a part of myself. Not with the respect and compassion I hope to one day. I've spent many years denying a part of myself and my experience and it has taken its toll. Vietnam was the cutoff point in my life. I had a life before Vietnam and a life after. I'm still searching for the connection between the two," Perri explained.

Graduating in 1966 from Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn with her R.N., Perri enlisted in the Army and signed up to go to Vietnam thinking war was "heroes, medals and romance. I stepped off the plane in Vietnam and was immediately pushed into a bunker. We were being fired upon, explosions everywhere. I kept wondering, 'Why would anybody want to shoot at me?'" Perri remembered.

Only 48 hours after leaving Travis Air Force Base in California, Perri was dressed in fatigues and combat boots, standing in a quonset hut, in charge of the pre-op ward of the 24th Evac. "Choppers started coming in and I stood up and paced in circles. I had no idea what was going to happen next. I could hear a chopper land, there was a tremendous wind, the door of the hut blew open and two men entered carrying a stretcher between them. I asked myself, 'What is wrong with this person?' I still remember the shock I felt when I discovered it was a baby with its head blown open on that stretcher. It had never occurred to me there would be babies involved," Perri recalled.

No fighting man in Vietnam was more than ten minutes from an American hospital unit. Perri dealt with severed limbs and heads, dying men, women and children and her own sense of futility in the face of such catastrophic violence. "There was no way one person could do enough. No matter what I did they kept dying. The smell of Napalm was everywhere. To this day, that smell stays with me and often signals the onset of a

flashback," Perri, who has symptoms of Post Traumatic Shock Disorder (PTSD), said.

When the casualties coming in would lessen temporarily, Perri would put on her baby blue chiffon dress and silver shoes, curl her hair and apply nailpolish and try to remember what life used to be like. Occasionally she and a girlfriend would get away to a Hilton in Bangkok and take endless bubblebaths, trying without success to wash the red dust off their bodies. "That red ring around the bathtub is brilliantly burned into my memory. Our hospital had been erected directly after the defoliation of the area." Perri is certain the red dust had something to do with Agent Orange and with her unexplained illnesses today.

A woman who thrives on functioning in many different capacities simultaneously, Perri immersed herself in volunteer work while in Vietnam to counter the negative impact the war was having upon her. She was part of a MED CAP team, a traveling health clinic, that cared for ailing Vietnam villagers. "I played with the babies, cooked with the women and cared for the ill. I fell in love with the people," Perri said.

She also volunteered at a leprosarium run by a French priest on an old rubber plantation. "I always thought being around people with leprosy would be disgusting but this experience is one of my most treasured. The people were beautiful, flowers grew everywhere, and I taught the children to play hopscotch."

It was the intersecting of her volunteer work with the horror of war that on January 30, 1968, Tet, shattered Perri's belief in goodness in the world. "I was traveling alone on my way to a seven-day leave in Hong Kong and had to stay overnight at a replacement battalion where I was the only woman. When I arrived, all hell broke loose, bombs exploding everywhere. They put me in a tent that had a bunker built around it. It had a flap of material for a door. The temperature was 132 degrees. The sky was red with flames. I had stripped to my underwear because of the heat and every time a bomb hit, the door blew open and there I sat exposed to a bunkerful of soldiers. Finally, I barricaded the door.

"An officer arrived in the morning with my orders to return to the 24th evac. My leave was over. We headed out in a jeep with war all around us. On our way to the hospital we had to pass through a village where I had volunteered. It had been my favorite place to go. The village was not there. Just burning buildings, smoldering bodies, everywhere. They drove the jeep right over those bodies and I can to this day feel my sense of hysteria. It was massive loss and for me it was massive personal loss. I loved those people. We had to get out of the jeep because we were being fired upon. They left me standing in the middle of that burning village while someone went to use a field phone to call for a tank. I remember screaming, 'Why did you do this? How could you do this?' And they said, 'The V.C. did it.' I looked around at all those burning bodies and said, 'The V.C. doesn't use white phosphorus.' It was our side that had burned that village. That was the beginning of my culpability. This was what war was about. What I had created in that village doing good work had been destroyed. I left me there.

Just as in Vietnam after Tet, when Perri, though numb, continued to function with a high level of efficiency, upon her return to the U.S. and the subsequent eighteen years, Perri's accomplishments and commitments continued unhampered by her bouts with illnesses, her long days without sleep, and her fear of

being crazy. Perri and others founded Womanshelter in Holyoke.

"There are so many parallels in the work I do with battered women and my experience in Vietnam. There is that same feeling I am slapping a bandaid on a gaping wound. My experience in Vietnam, my work with battered women and incest survivors all contribute to my passionate commitment to working against violence," Perri said.

Perri has just been awarded a Veteran's Scholarship which she will use to fund her doctoral research on oral histories of women in Vietnam. In early May she will testify before a Congressional subcommittee on women veterans' experiences.

"Today I am learning to comfort myself and learning to be with myself. Every day is still a struggle. I have to remind myself that not everybody is suffering all the time, that there is some good in the world, joy as well as pain. I will always wonder who I would have been had I not gone to Vietnam. But from that experience comes my commitment to eliminating violence," Perri asserted.

Peggy Perri still breaks out in a cold sweat when a chopper cruises above her roof at night. She panics when her son, Danny, gets a cold, "might this be some dread disease descended from Agent Orange contamination?" Vividly painful stories emerge from her forgotten past—distracting, hard-to-swallow experiences—crawling out into the light of day to be reclaimed and reckoned with. And then there is the voice. The voice of a young Army nurse resonating through the body of a seasoned woman. A voice so clearly stating, "I won't be silent any longer!"

"Total numbness, dead, is what I felt. Minutes later the tank pulled into the village and returned us to the hospital where I worked 50 hours nonstop with the worst casualties we had ever seen. The next thing I knew I was sitting on this bed in the Hong Kong Hilton on my seven-day leave. I didn't talk about the trauma I had witnessed during those past few days. I internalized all I saw and remained silent.

"There is a book called *The Silenced Trauma* by Laura Brown that states it is not the trauma itself that results in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, but the enforced silence around the trauma. I have only recently claimed this memory."

"Two years ago, after 18 years of silence, Perri spoke out publicly about her experiences in Vietnam while attending "A Working Conference for Women Vets" at the Joiner Center, UMass/Boston. It was there she listened to other women vets talk of experiences of flashbacks, nightmares and sleep disorders similar to her own. A video was made of this conference, entitled, "The Invisible Force: Women in the Military".

The transitions column would best serve the community of the Valley Women's voice readers by representing a diversity of transitions. As the author I invite readers to send to the VWV, c/o McCallum, the names and telephone numbers of women in transition who would like to share their stories of hope and struggle.



Joanne Ehret, R.Ac., M.T.
REGISTERED ACUPUNCTURIST
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Announcements

EXTRA, EXTRA, EXTRA THEATER TOO'S SHOW DATE CHANGED

The Theater, Too production of ALUMNAE NEWS: THE DORIS DAY YEARS has been postponed until June 27 (women's night) and 28, and July 2 and 3. All performances will take place at the Center for the Arts in Northampton.

SERVICES FOR THE YOUNG AND GAY

Are you, 13-20, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning? Come to Lifeline Institute's free drop-in support group meeting each week, or call our teen hotline Sunday's from 7-9 p.m., or Tuesday's

from 4 to 6 p.m.. All our programs are strictly confidential. (413) 253-2822

LIFELINE INSTITUTE PROVIDES COUNSELING

Lifeline Institute, a non-profit organization providing educational and psychotherapeutic services to gay, and lesbian, and bisexual communities is looking for volunteers to help post flyers of our ongoing programs, especially the youth project. Other volunteer jobs available as well. Please call 253-2822.

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EWC's RESOURCE REFERRAL PROGRAM OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF INFO

The Resource and Referral Program at Everywoman's Center offers a wide range of information and referral services for university and community women. If you want information about women's services in the area, need a medical, legal, or support group referral, or are looking for housing or a job, the Resource and Referral Program can help. The program also has self-help resource files and books on any topics of concern to women, and a large lending library. University and community women are welcome to call 545-0883, or drop by Wilder Hall on the UMass campus. Everywoman's Center is open Monday through Friday from 9 to 4, and Wednesdays from noon to 7 p.m.

Colors: a Decade of Empowerment," at Spelman College in Atlanta, GA June 24—28, 1987.

Registration materials available now. Please contact NWSA, Emory University, P.O. Box 21223, Atlanta GA 30322. For more information call (404) 727-7845.

LESBIAN CALENDAR WILL OFFER EVENTS LISTING

The Calendar, a lesbian monthly publication, calendar of events and community information. For 12 issues, send \$10 to: The Calendar, P.O. 5000, suite 132, Northampton MA 01060. Also we are hoping that a clearing house for scheduling will be one of the "benefits" of this calendar. There is a phone machine on all the time, so please feel free to leave a message and we can get back to you for confirmation of information. If there is an event already scheduled we will let you know and you can pick an "empty" night.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S STUDIES CONFERENCE IN ATLANTA

The National Women's Studies Association will celebrate its tenth anniversary during its upcoming ninth annual conference, "Weaving Women's



**Scenes
from
the
March!**

photos by Annie Clarkin



continued from page 1

The Gay and Lesbian Defense Committee will be marching on Dukakis' Brookline home on Mother's Day to demand that the governor respond to the recommendations of his own commission and issue a public apology to the gay and lesbian community, she said.

"This country is not going to be pushed into the 1950s and lesbians and gays will not be pushed back into the closet For love and for life--we are not going back!" she said.

Rainbow Coalition member and former Congressional and mayoral candidate Mel King, who teaches community development at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, told the crowd to say "I am somebody" three times. He said it is important affirm one's own identity, because once you take that step, you have to grant that privilege to other people, whether they are gay or straight, or black or white.

Commenting on his participation in the march, King said, "I think it's a very powerful political statement. It's about empowerment. It's about self definition. It's about organizing, and it's about change, but most importantly it's about love."

The Gay and Lesbian Defense Committee has been organizing on the issue for two years, and recently seemed to win a victory when a commission appointed

by the governor repudiated the anti-gay policy.

Math said her organization will continue to raise the issue as Dukakis embarks on a presidential campaign. "He can run but he cannot hide!" she said.

The Dukakis administration's decision to bar lesbians and gay men from being foster care providers is a "dangerous inroad to giving the state the power to define normal." She noted that one of Hitler's first acts was to imprison known lesbians and gays. "To anyone familiar with the history of Nazism--Dukakis's foster care policy is a chilling precedent," she said.

A common argument against allowing gay people to be foster care providers is that their children might turn out to be gay, she said.

"As a lesbian I am supposed to swear up and down that I would not communicate to my daughter any of the joy and pride that I have found in lesbianism," she said. Rather than just noting that statistically most children of gays are rabidly heterosexual ("they have to rebel against something") Math said "if the kids turn out to be gay -- I say -- should they be so lucky."

Speakers also urged the audience to participate in a lesbian and gay "shop-in" at the Hampshire Mall on June 5. For more information, contact the UMass Program for Gay and Lesbian Concerns. ♦

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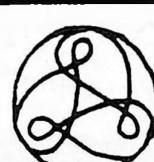


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